Rare Coins, Medals and Paper Money — Bought and Sold

New Netherlands Coin Co., Inc.

SUITE 401
1 WEST 47TH STREET
NEW YORK 36, N. Y.

PHONES PLAZA 7-5245-6

December 4, 1958

Mr. John J. Pittman
4 Acton Street
Rochester 18, New York

Dear John:

Thank you for your letter of November 2? concerning the 1853 $20.00 U.S. Assay Office Proof which I am trying so very hard to sell you.

I will try to answer your various questions concerning the specimen of this coin in your possession, in numerical sequence. Believe it or not, this is absolutely the last time I am going to write to you concerning this piece.

1. The dies of the U.S. Assay Office Double Eagle, or any variation thereof, are, as far as I am concerned, not in existence.

2. The 1853 $20.00 U.S. Assay Office Proof in your possession was struck in 1853 in San Francisco, California by Curtis Perry & Ward. It is not a restrike, and was not made at any other time than 1853.

3. There are presently five specimens of perfect Proofs extant, and two impaired Proofs. This, of course, is for my hoard. There is also, at least one and possibly two Proofs of the same coin, from different dies, which were struck in the Philadelphia Mint simultaneously with the piece in your possession. For illustration of the only such Philadelphia manufactured piece known to me, see Stack's Bell sale, December, 1944.

4. I unconditionally guarantee that the coin in your possession described above, was absolutely struck in San Francisco in 1853, that it was the intent of Augustus Humbert to make a Proof impression, and that, as far as I am concerned, no restrikes or imitations of any sort exist.

5. Mention will be made of these Proofs in the next edition of Standard Catalog.

6. I will gladly refund your purchase price of $1100.00 for the aforementioned coin should any statements made by me herewith be proven untrue. This guarantee is absolute and without limitation.

Creators of Distinguished Numismatic Auction Sale Catalogues

7. I cannot say who was present when the coins were obtained, as that information is hardly pertinent.

8. I personally cleaned all five of the perfect Proofs upon receipt of same, by using warm water and Ivory soap to remove finger marks and other foreign material from their surfaces.

9. Your piece, as well as the others, were struck from slighly defective and rusty dies. If you are interested, I can show you any number of Uncirculated or used specimens displaying the same manufacturing imperfections.

10. I cannot at this time reveal how these pieces were "discovered". The data will be published as I see fit to release it.

I hope that all of this makes you happy, John, but to me it is one big pain in the neck. I am surprised that you value Mike Kolman's opinion so highly, or it it that of some other expert? I told all of my "friends" in Detroit to put up or shut up. I am still waiting for the first "Master of Intimation" to question the coins in writing. Barroom gossip does not bother me in the least.

We will stop on the Canadian Catalog for the present. I will explain in detail when I see you. I would like to have you do something for me and yourself on the Standard Catalog re early Proofs instead of the Canadian listings at this time. Are you coming to our sale so we can talk things over?

Very best personal regards.

Very truly yours,

J. J. Ford

John J. Ford, Jr.

JJF:Mh

JOHN J. FORD, JR.
Numismatist
176 HENDRICKSON AVE.
ROCKVILLE CENTRE, L.I., N.Y.

Oct. 11, 1964

Mr. Eric P. Newman
P.O. Box 14020
St. Louis, Mo. 63178

Dear Eric:

Since you are the only one of the self-appointed vigilantes to have the decency to contact me direct, in reference to the 1853 USAOG $20, 900 THOUS., coins, I am pleased to supply to you the following information.

There were seven brilliant proof coins in the 1957-58 hoard that I (and NN) obtained through the efforts of Paul Franklin. These coins were all from the same obverse and reverse dies, and we found no appreciable difference in the die states. Some characteristics of the obverse die are: Left end lacking on scroll; 9 re-engraved; first 0, first punched too high; nick in die on rim over last S in STATES; die defective above E in UNITED. There are many different reverse dies for the '53 USAOG twenties; the reverse die used for the proofs we call "Rev. A." It can be easily identified by a tiny tit near the top of the right stand of the letter "N" of UNITED, and three dash-like defects above (and to the left of) the "C" of CALIFORNIA. There are also two fine die breaks at the bottom of the reverse, in the peripheral field.

I explained to you how these coins were purchased on the telephone. All were wrapped in old, yellowed linen hankerchiefs. The weight of each piece was marked in lead pencil on the hankerchiefs; there were some notations as to alloy differences re these seven coins. Franklin was not able to get the hankerchiefs, nor was he able to obtain a family journal, which would be a very fruitful source of data. However, he did manage to copy down the weight of each of these proof coins, from the hankerchiefs. As soon as we got the coins to the office, Walter Breen and I weighed each of them. Subsequently, the coins were sold, with the exception of two specimens, which are now both in my personal collection. I will list the seven proofs, and give you the weight of each as obtained with the coin, as weighed by Breen and myself, and tell you to whom we initially sold each piece. Where possible, I will tell you the present whereabouts of each specimen:

518¼ Grains (WB-JF)	Hankerchief 518 Grains	Ford coll.
516	516	Ford coll.
514½	514	NN to E. Landau, to NN, to Jake Bell, to J. H. Murrell*
515	515	NN to W. Amelingmeier, to Jim Sloss, 2/3/59, at $1200.
516¼	516	PF to Mike Kolman, 8/15/58, at $1200.
516¼	516½	NN to R. Yablum, Yablum to Stack's, to J. H. Murrell*
516 3/4 Grains	Hankerchief 516½ Grains	NN to H. Clifford, 3/3/58, at $1100.

* One of the Murrell coins was sold to Kagin-Hollinbeck at the 1964 ANA (Cleveland) Convention, together with other Pioneer gold coins.

To my knowledge, Murrell owns his second piece, and both Sloss and Clifford still own their examples. I do not know the present whereabouts of the Kolman specimen (which is the only one out with the exact correct weight of 516 grains).

The Kolman specimen was from a hankerchief marked ".020 Thous. Copper." While we believe that all seven pieces were struck in Philadelphia, and that these were made in different silver-copper alloy ratios, this piece is the only one which we were able to obtain the original alloy notation on. (Standard U.S. Mint alloy for gold; 900/1000 - .050 silver - .050 copper to .033 silver - .067 copper.) Our source, with whom Franklin had quite a discussion, remembered reading about a controversy in 1853, at the USAOG, concerning the amount of copper alloy needed for the 900 Thous. coins, in order to conform with (then) existing U.S. law.

Subsequent to the unearthing of the seven proofs, a number of highly attractive "Proof-like" first strikes were obtained from the original source, and friends of his, including his banker. (The original owner turned in $14,000. to $15,000. in gold coin, in 1933-34.) These were from various reverse dies. Probably the best of them was sold to Bob Batchelder in 1962-63. It was from the reverse die with a dash-like mark between TE of UNITED. Another, handled first strike, was sold to Gaston DiBello at the 1958 ANA (LA) Convention, for $225.00. Many of the "Proof-like" specimens have changed hands as proofs.

In response to an inquiry by L. S. Werner, I wrote a letter to Elston Bradfield, which was printed in the August, 1963 issue of "The Numismatist," on pages 1090-91. An earlier reference, in the same magazine, to the 1853 USAOG $20, 900 THOUS. proofs, can be found in the April, 1909 issue, page 111. Further information can be found in Part IV, "Pattern and Experimental Pieces of California, 1849-53" of "Private Gold Coinage of California, 1849-55" by E. H. Adams. (See pages 104-106.)

I obtained a large number of USAOG and Moffat-USAOG coins, patterns and trials, in both gold and lead, together with the seven proofs. Included was a proof twenty, in silver, reeded edge, with 900 <u>clearly</u> over 884 (THOUS.). The lead trials (which I still have) are identical with those in the Joseph C. Mitchelson coll., which is on display in the Connecticut State Library in Hartford. I do not have duplicates of all of the Mitchelson pieces, but I have many lacking in the Mitchelson lot. All are of identical style and fabric.

All of the pieces that Franklin found (that were different) have been carefully photographed and listed. I have a filing cabinet of information on various unknown Pioneer coiners and mints, and in particular have much on the USAOG. However, there is considerable information I have not had a chance to develop, most of it in the National Archives... Eleven years ago I obtained a microfilm of Humbert's USAOG records (which Adams could not locate), together with other data.

If you wish, you can examine my files upon your next vist east, in connection with the proof (and related) coins. Even so, I do not wish to have my discovery material published at this time. My reasons for this are quite easy to understand: (a) the source for most of the items unearthed is still very much alive, and I am trying to locate similar material, and (b) there are many loose ends to be covered, before the story could (or should) be told. Finally, I have instructed all of my friends and clients to cooperate fully with requests for coins to be photographed and examined.

Unfortunately, I must question the intent of your fellow inquisitors. With possibly two exceptions, these gentlemen are not in the pursuit of numismatic knowledge. In fact, at least two of them represent the epitome of numismatic ignorance. In order to keep premature conclusions and indiscreet statements to a minimum, any such that come to hand will be promptly referred to our attorneys.

For years, I have tried to put a little something back into the coin game which has been so good to me. Charles Wormser has encouraged this type of thinking, and I think that our sale catalogues speak for themselves. It seems ironic that the some of the baser elements in our hobby should be allied with serious numismatic minds in an investigation which seems senseless, and which seemingly must be carried on in a clandestine manner.

I am sorry that I gave you a hard time on the telephone, but there are times I get so disgusted that I wonder what I am doing in the rare coin business. There are many stables that could be cleaned, and I honestly feel that some of your associates could commence operations in their own backyards.

Keep in touch-

Best personal regards,

John J. Ford, Jr.

STRASSER, SPIEGELBERG, FRIED & FRANK

[illegible]LES A RIEGELMAN 1902-195[illegible]

120 BROADWAY, NEW YORK N Y 10005

WORTH 4 6500 AREA CODE 212

CABLE "STERIC"

WASHINGTON OFFICE
1700 K STREET N W
WASHINGTON 6 D C

FELIX S COHEN 1932-1953

ARTHUR L STRASSER
GEORGE A SPIEGELBERG
WALTER J FRIED
HANS J FRANK
LESLIE A JACOBSON
JOHN F FINN JR
HERMANN E SIMON
WILLIAM [illegible] RIEGELMAN
LAURENCE ROSENTHAL

SAM HARRIS
ROBERT H PREISKEL
LEON SILVERMAN
BENJAMIN NASSAU
JOEL DOLKART
FRANKLIN L BASS
PETER J RYAN
HERBERT L GALANT

[illegible] HENRY WERNER
HOWARD C WESTRICH
DORA FURTH
HERBERT HIRSCH
ELIHU MODLIN
DANIEL B POSNER
FREDERICK LUBCHER
RICHARD O LOENGARD JR
EDWIN HELLER
PETER M DOMONY
MILTON R ACKMAN
LEWIS A STERN
VICTOR S FRIEDMAN

MAYER SIEGEL
ARNOLD M SHEIDLOWER
SIDNEY L DAVIS
KENNETH McLAUGHLIN
IRVIN ROTHFARB
SOLOMON P FRIEDMAN
MARC P [illegible]
LEWIS BART STONE
BARRY [illegible]MAN
CHARLES A [illegible]STEIN
EDWIN H NORDLINGER
ROBERT H MANN
RICHARD M MICHAELS [illegible]
MORTON KLEVAN
JAY M HAFT
SHELDON RAAB

MAX M KAMPELMAN
ARTHUR LAZARUS JR
RICHARD SCHIFTER
HAROLD P GREEN

DANIEL M SINGER
ALAN I WURTZEL
JOEL R FEIDELMAN
ARNOLD H LEIBOWITZ
DAVID E BIRENBAUM

October 9, 1964

Dr. George Fuld
P. O. Box 9035
Akron, Ohio 44305

Dear Sir:

Please be advised that we represent New Netherlands Coin Co. of New York City, and are writing this letter on behalf of our client.

Our client has received word that you and others are circulating false rumors concerning certain $20 gold pieces of 1853 sold by our client. If you are circulating rumors in connection with these coins, please be advised that unless you and your associates immediately cease and desist from circulating said rumors, our client will be compelled to take such action as may be deemed appropriate.

Furthermore, if you and your associates continue the circulation of these rumors after this notice, our client will be compelled to assume that you and the others are acting with malice.

Very truly yours,

Laurence Rosenthal

LR:ra
Air Mail

October 16, 1964

Mr. John J. Ford, Jr.
176 Hendrickson Avenue
Rockville Centre
Long Island, New York

Dear John:

Thank you for your letter of October 11, 1964. It indicates your willingness to cooperate in a determination of facts relative to the $20 1853 U.S. Assay matter. I have distributed the fact portions of your letter to Sloss, Pittman, and Fuld, in accordance with my statement to you over the telephone and to which you had no objection.

In your humorous way, you charge me, personally, with being a self-appointed vigilante in this instance. While I ordinarily welcome that charge in coin research, it is not true in the matter as to these coins, as my opinion was solicited. As you know, this organization's interest is in numismatic facts, not rumors, whitewash, or personalities. Your statement over the telephone that I was in Pittsburgh, at some meeting at which the pieces were discussed, is fiction.

Any further data which you can furnish will be of interest.

Kindest personal regards.

Sincerely yours,

ERIC P. NEWMAN NUMISMATIC
EDUCATION SOCIETY

EPN/atb

35.80 D.

WESTERN
NUMISMATIC
AMERICANA

1032
807 THOU.
184

Rare Coins, Medals and Paper Money — Bought and Sold

New Netherlands Coin Co., Inc.

SUITE 401
1 WEST 47TH STREET
NEW YORK 36, N. Y.

PHONES PLAZA 7-5245-6

December 30, 1964

Mr. Eric P. Newman
400 Washington Ave.
St. Louis 2, Mo.

Dear Eric:

I just wanted to drop you a quick line, before I left for the Florida Convention.

I have been too busy to work on the USAOG situation, but I am collecting photographs. I also discovered another very interesting Pattern, of the USAOG, which was given me as a gift back in 1958. Please go slow, until I get a chance to send you some material and data. I am endeavoring to obtain either a copy of (or information concerning) what Fuld wanted to talk about, but have not as yet been successful. I can only assume, since you do not wish to level with me, that Fuld had at least one of the Proofs tested and came up with the conclusion that the coin was a cast, and/or that the alloy was incorrect. Since the possibility is very strong, that the pieces could have been struck from a cast planchet or a partly rolled strip, I would like to know <u>specifically</u> what Fuld was hanging his hat on, and why I "should keep my skirts clean." This last quotation is from you, as you well know.

Aside from the above, which continues to nettle me, I would like to leave you with a friendly thought. Only today, did I become aware of the letter of September 3rd last, to you from Charles M. Johnson, concerning your running for the ANA Board of Governors in 1965. I do not know why you feel the attainment of such a position would conflict with your affiliation at the ANS. In truth, you are badly needed at the top level of the ANA, as I consider the ANA activities in comparison to those of the Society, relatively important. YOU BELONG ON THE ANA BOARD OF GOVERNORS, and you and I both know it. The only thing is, it is unfortunate that you must hustle for the job.

Best wishes for a Happy and personally satisfying New Year, I remain

Sincerely,

John J. Ford, Jr.

JJF:dn

EXCUSE MRS. N's
BOO-BOOS
J

Creators of Distinguished Numismatic Auction Sale Catalogues

Telephone 686-[illegible]924
Area Code 207

August 4, 1966

Mr. Eric P. Newman
Eric P. Newman Numismatic Education Society
6450 Cecil Avenue
St. Louis 5, Missouri

Dear Eric:

During the forthcoming ANA convention in Chicago, the time and place will be given you sometime during the affair, your testimony will be requested in regards to the "PROOF" 1853 (900thous. fine) United States Assay Office of Gold double eagle that a Mr. Paul Garland of Maryville, Tennessee purchased from a Mr. Tom Ryan of Chicago, Illinois.

As you undoubtedly know by now an Arbitration Panel has been set up to work the Garland-Ryan matter out. Any and all information you can supply our Panel in this matter will be greatly appreciated, I remain,

Cordially,

Ronnie Carr, Chairman
ARBITRATION PANEL FOR THE GARLAND-RYAN PROBLEM

cc: File

[illegible] pattern that
#6 Tableau pattern
has elements on the
top of A and tiny diagonal
that form part of A /
ASSAY

Sleeve J3A115   8/18/44
TWT/F 114 (cont

L of GOLD line

Ed under lotion

C of 1000 line

raised at under C

Obverse.
Dent on I of UNITED
scratch under right line
of last A of AMERICA.

Edge:
Reeds same as 112

8/18/60
A Schulman Kreisberg sale
picture
Purchased by Clifford
10 side. apparently lead

Obv.
Concentric rings
weak pitted and could be
a cast.

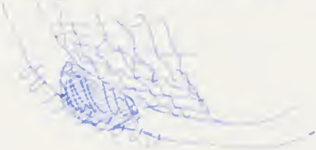
Rev. weak pitted
Smeared all over

PF
SƎN ICI A S S
OLD

No die break apparently
[illegible] under T dent near
here dark spot
No dent on rim
Gash at 11 oclock from [illegible]
outside dentilled ring
Filled in area [illegible]

Breeding [illegible]

Filled in color somewhat at 7 5c entirely different from [illegible] area between all other portions



4/18/68

Ford T.T/F-114
said to be made of [illegible] by
Ford [illegible] [illegible]

Reverse

No horizontal line on N of UNITED

Lump under T of UNITED

Dent under F of CALIF

Dent of : of ASSAY

No die cracks from mesh to border.

Die break lump over first A of ASSAY

Large ~~[illegible]~~ break between first S of ASSAY and L below

Break of foot of A not clearly indicated or determinable

See next (~~[illegible]~~) page

Woodward Sale
B 1862

Adams in 1910 mentioned
Crosby describes
a proof USAGS

8/18/64

Ford JF fig 122 picture shows

Reverse.
raised line on right upright of N of UNITED

dent in base line under F of CALIF

No lump under T of UNITED

Trace of die break from first A of ASSAY

Dents above Y of ASSAY

die crack from mesh to curve at 6:30 and 7:30 [illegible]

Obverse
Diagonal dent in I of UNITED
Raised line under second A of AMERICA.

Edge.
Large reeds on edge

John told me that Franklin was a very superb metallurgist.

Ceremonial Celebration
in gold

~~[illegible]~~

~~[illegible]~~ set with die
Stamp

Incaca

Kagan

Write Dan to get
picture 1 + 2 + 3 [illegible]

Write Frank of Nancy.

Ask Franklin about dies

H Clifford plant
picture 8/18/66

obv lettering [illegible] UNITED
Scratch under [illegible] of
AMERICA
[illegible] picture
not [illegible]

Standard Catalogue

P.S. Yeoman (Copyright in prior year)	TEN DOLLARS ~~Anonymous~~ Sac. Or et CAL 49 GOLD Unique	MEYERS & Co 1 oz TROY $18.00 Unique	U.S. ASSAY OFFICE DI-[illegible] 1853 [illegible]	BLAKE & AGNELL [illegible] 25 DOLLAR 1855 Unique	BLAKE & AGNELL 1 oz [illegible] 1855 Unique (Blake & Co)	BLAKE & Co 20 DOLLARS [illegible] (Parsons & Co Assayers)	[illegible]	[illegible]
1955 (8th)	Not	Not	Not					
1956 (9th)	Not	Not	Not	Not	Not	Not	Not	Not
1957 (10th)	Not	Not	Not	Not	21-	Not	Not	Not
1958 (11th)	211	Not	Not		21-	Not	Not	228
1959 (12th)	211	Not	Not	Not	21-	Not	Not	228
1960 (13th)	1-	19-	20-	210	21-	Not	Not	228
1961 (14th)	195	19-	20-	209	211	211	[illegible]	[illegible]
1962 (15th)	195	[illegible]	20-	209	216	210	222	228
1963 (16th)	211	211	20-+	22-	23-	236	22-	[illegible]
1964 (17th)								
1965 (18th)	217	217	224	224	230	230	[illegible]	[illegible]
1966 (19th)	Study	Study	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
1967 (20th)	22-	22-	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
1968 (21st)	Study	Study	Study	Study	Study	Study	Study	[illegible]

Standard Catalogue

	Blake & Co #20 1855	Parsons & Co Assayers 1860 TWENTY DOL.
1953 16th Edit	—	—
1954-5 17th edition Associate editor of this edition John J. Ford, Research by Walter Breen	"2 known" "One of these is misstruck and looped." (p 184)	Unique (p. 181)
1957 18th edition Editorial Consultation and supervision John J. Ford Jr. Compilation and Basic Research Walter Breen	"3 known" "The first specimen was unearthed by John J. Ford Jr. in 1953, the second in 1954" (p. 184)	Unique "Discovered in 1956, this piece was authenticated by John J. Ford Jr. the following year." (p. 181)

8/18/44

Ford JF [illegible] 123 pictures shown

Reviewer:

All items listed in 122 summary

Cleveland

All items listed in 123 summary

8/18/66

J Ford gave me envelope containing pictures and on jacket was

1853 100/1000 USA06 SAN FRANCISCO ALLOY TRIAL "PROOFS"

2/11 - 23/58

(John says this is marked [illegible])

	J Weight	USAOG Wgt	
1	518.25	518	JF tq-122
2	516	516	JF tg-125
3	514.50	514	NN Landau, NN, Bell, Merrill, Kean?
4	515	515	JIM [illegible] 2/3/59 $1000
5	516.25	516*	MIKE KOLMAN 8/15/58 $1000, SILTON, RYAN, GARLAND
6	516.25	516.50	KAY TADLIM 5/1/58 STARKS, MERRELL, KAHN
7	516.75	516.50	H. [illegible]FORD 8/6/58 $1100

STD US MINT .900 - [illegible] AG [illegible]

.900 [illegible]

* Marked "[illegible] THE [illegible] [illegible]"

1/23/66

Lee Young by telephone said US Assay disc was sold to someone in Texas thru John Rowe. Said Carr would know detail.

Said Henry Clifford was big customer of John Ford in L.A.

11/23/66

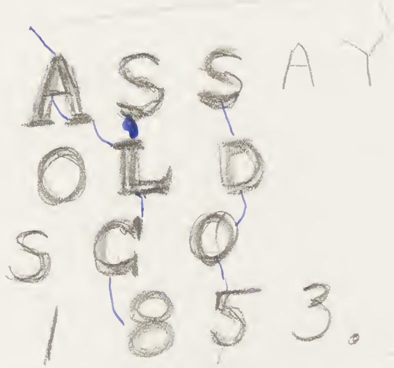
Lee Young said on telephone that he got Anonymous Bar 1849 from Kagin + sold it for $11,000 to Dr Calvert Emmens in Calif at profit of $1,000. Emmens returned it because Young would not give opinion it was genuine. It was returned to Kagin.

EPN

Mayflower Sale Lot #1039 5/1/07

#10 USAOG 1853 One 516 grains.

Processed with air or liquid jets to eliminate dents and resurface!



Extended die break as shown

the obv has radial processing lines all over.

the rev processing is directly across length of panel on reverse

Clennie, Reed OK Frame line has no dent under F of FRANCISCO

Type ~~[crossed out]~~

Coin					
#1	884 thou	~~[crossed out]~~	Lump		JOS
#2	900 THOUS		Lump	No Rev die Break	JOS
#3	900		Lump	No Die Bre	JOS
#4	900		Lump	No Die Break	JOS
#5			No Lump	No break	Garland ~~[crossed out]~~
#6			Lump	Die break	Tobias
#7			No lump	No break	~~[illegible]~~ ~~[crossed out]~~
#8	900		Lump	No die Break	EMN
#9	900		Lump	Rev Die Break.	EMN
#10	884		Lump		JHU
11	900		Lump		JHU
12	Farouk Zobrusky Bell		Lump		AK..
13			Lump	Die Break	~~[crossed out]~~ EPN
14			Lump	Die Break	HF
15			Lump	Double Struck Rev Die break	JOS(?)
16			No lump	Double Struck Rev [redacted]	~~[crossed out]~~ Holli
17			Lump	Die Break	Holli
18			Lump	Die Break	Holli
19			Lump	No die break	EPN